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**JOSEPH
CORNELL**

THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK

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JOSEPH CORNELL cannot properly be called a painter or a sculptor for he makes neither paintings nor sculpture. He does make collages and boxes and does so with such knowledge and such capacity to have earned the designation *artist* in the fullest sense of this much diluted term. As every artist does, Cornell *translates* his chosen raw material into forms and images. Translation here means to raise such materials from their commonplace existence to a meaningful state—one within which has been lodged a particular awareness so intense as to gain the broadest validity.

Cornell's raw materials in the most general sense are *memories* from a past that will fade away in lifeless archives unless they are rescued through a new pertinence. Therefore, Cornell in the first instance is an archivist of a vanished age. The rooms of his Long Island house are filled with the melancholy mementos of a past era. A veritable paper cemetery they are—a *sic transit gloria mundi*, for great divas and performers, the brilliant and noble life of sparkling talent and beauty. The glitter of an elegant, erudite, graced and gifted élite sleeps in these files like an enchanted princess to be redeemed with a kiss.

If Cornell were nothing but archivist his passion would have chosen the hapless method of mumification. But Cornell is archivist with an ulterior motive, which is to safeguard the subject matter for his art, while as an artist he is above all capable of imbuing inert matter with life. His efforts at revivication therefore succeed through that very translation into form that Goethe recognized as "the secret of the master." Through his process, and in Joseph Cornell's hands, the dated, the banal, and the seemingly irrelevant assume contemporary relevance and come to life in a new and intensely vital context.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is presenting 10 collages and 78 boxes by Joseph Cornell with that sense of privilege that accompanies an identification with timely validity. Joseph Cornell who overcame his manifest need for seclusion to help with his exhibition is our first object of gratitude. The lenders of boxes and collages, separately listed in this catalogue, have our sincere appreciation. So does Mrs. Diane Waldman, Research Fellow at the Guggenheim, whose familiarity with Cornell's work gained over years of devoted study has qualified her to select and to present this show.

Thomas M. Messer, Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Mr. Julien Levy, Mr. Donald Windham and Mr. Parker Tyler for information and advice that proved invaluable to this exhibition, and to Mrs. Eleanor Ward, Mr. Richard Feigen, Mr. Allan Frumkin and Mr. John Myers for providing many useful leads in the initial stages of its preparation. My grateful thanks also to Linda Konheim, editor of the catalogue, and Orrin Riley for his skillful handling of the installation of this exhibition.

D. W.

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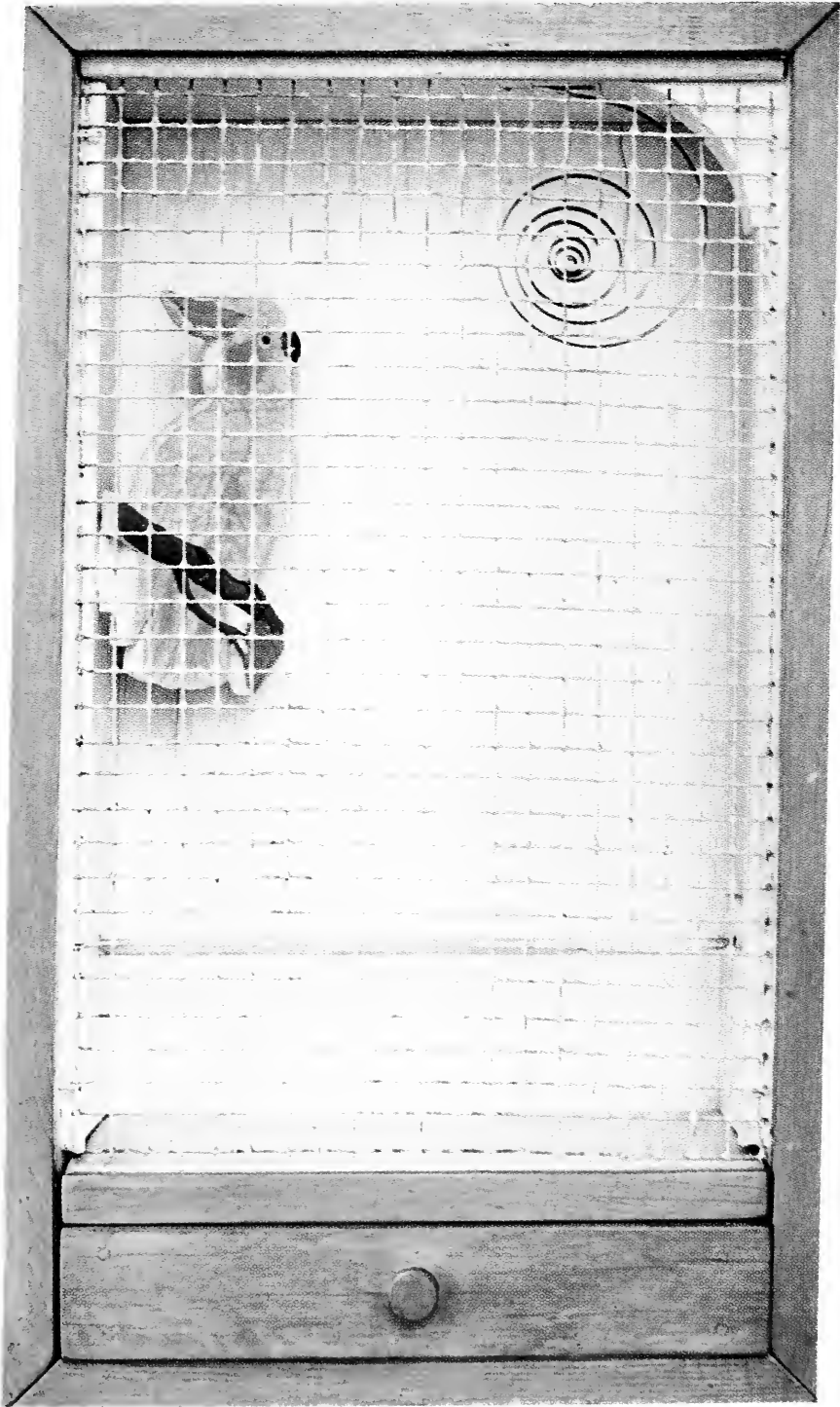
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Cockatoo: Keepsake Parakeet, 1949-1953.

JOSEPH CORNELL

DIANE WALDMAN

Little is known of Joseph Cornell's early life. Born on Christmas Eve 1903 (the major exhibitions of his work have usually been held towards the end of December) at Nyack, New York, Cornell attended the Phillips Academy at Andover, Massachusetts. In 1929, he and his family moved to Flushing, Queens, to the modest house in which he still lives. A shy and reticent man, he is as reluctant to reveal the details of his life as he is to part with one of his boxes. The boxes are his progeny; they have engaged in a dialogue with him and with each other over the years as, indeed, they speak to us. They were created within the milieu of family life—of commonplace living—not in the isolation of a studio. The rhythm of daily life—daytime, nighttime, time passing, another day, a change of season—seemed to him like the unfolding of life in the *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*. Way back, before the boxes began, Cornell recalls the Sunday afternoons, after church, listening to Protestant services on the radio, and the great sense of religion within the wonderful warmth of family life. During the twenties, Cornell was involved with the life and culture of New York, absorbing classical music, going to the opera, and collecting on a small scale, mostly Japanese prints and Americana. He speaks of the boxes as having been fashioned of a great love of the city—of a city and a time, with its seemingly endless plethora of books and material, that is gone now. All of this has been captured in his boxes and given to us, in wave after wave of memories, with a pulsating sense of life and as a living presence.

With little formal art training, most of Cornell's schooling during the early years was largely the result of the lively artistic climate that existed in New York during the 1930's. If the scene was lively, it was also confined, and for lack of a meeting place, many of the New York and expatriate European artists would frequent the few avant-garde galleries then in existence. It was at the Julien Levy Gallery, which opened in 1931, that Cornell met most of the painters and writers associated with the Surrealist movement who were in the United States prior to and during World War II. The first American exhibition of Salvador Dali took place there in December 1933. The next year, for his second exhibition at the gallery, Dali arrived in New York to much acclaim, followed by the other leading Surrealists.

Soon after Cornell first saw Max Ernst's album, *La Femme 100 Têtes*, he showed his own initial efforts at collage to Julien Levy. These consisted of montages, on cardboard, done in the style of Ernst, which Levy included in a Surrealist group show in January 1932. For this exhibition, which launched the movement in New York, Cornell designed the cover of the catalogue. The exhibition included collages by Ernst, paintings by Dali, Ernst, Picasso, Man Ray and others, photographs by Atget, Boiffard, Man Ray, Moholy-Nagy, and George Platt Lynes, and a Man Ray *Snowball*, a commercial souvenir in the shape of a glass globe.

Besides the collages, Cornell exhibited a glass bell containing a mannequin's hand holding a collage of roses. The glass bell, of course, was a common Victorian decorative motif for showing clocks, artificial flowers, or other "bibelots"; the mannequin's hand was a standard prop of the Surrealists. The catalogue preface for another Surrealist exhibition, held

at the Galerie Pierre Collé in June 1933, gives ample evidence of Surrealist obsessions and some of Cornell's as well:

disagreeable objects, chairs, drawings, paintings, manuscripts,
objects to sniff, surreptitious automatic objects, books, ordinary
objects, maps, hands, exquisite corpses, palaces, butterflies,
blackbirds, pharmacies...¹

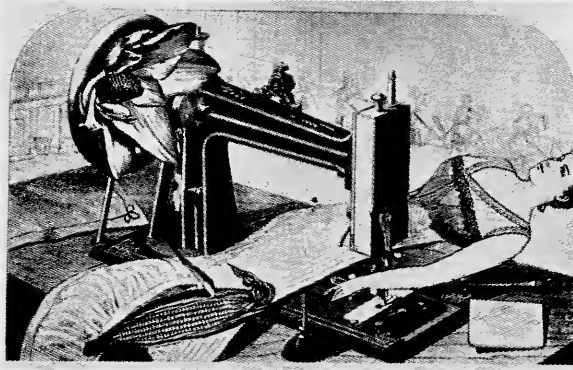
Later that year, Julien Levy held an exhibition of Cornell's "Minutiae, Glass Bells, Shadow Boxes, Coups d'Oeil, Jouets Surréalistes". Cornell's shadow boxes were all small, the largest measuring 5 x 9". They were complemented by thimbles propped on needles; small bisque angels and miniscule silver balls placed under small glass bells; and bright colored sequins, sewing pins, cut-up engravings of fish and butterflies, colored sand, and brass springs moving freely about in small round boxes which resembled compass cases. Both the objects and their containers varied only slightly from their original state; they were "transformed", in the manner of Duchamp and of the period, with only slight alterations to the readymade. All of his objects of this period have several features in common—they are small, fragile and modest in ambition—yet there is a particular charm to them. The emphasis is on the object, *per se*, without attempting to situate it within a larger, i.e., a plastic, context.

In 1936 Cornell was included in a major exhibition, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*, at The Museum of Modern Art. His *Soap Bubble Set*, of that same year, is listed in the catalogue as a "Composition of objects, 15½ x 14⅛", photographed with additional effects by George Platt Lynes". This arrangement was later regrouped into its present form and subsequently acquired by the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1938. In its final form there is a reorientation of emphasis in which each of the objects is located both within its own compartment and in fixed relationship to the others—an early attempt to group these separate objects into a coherent unit with a sense of three-dimensional form, scale, and structure new to the work. To achieve this, he temporarily abandoned the random movement of the earlier objects. Later, the use of movement became subject to greater esthetic control appearing in all phases of his work, both literally (*Taglioni's Jewel Casket*, 1940; *Multiple Cubes*, 1946-48; the Sand Fountains and Sandboxes of the fifties) and implicitly (the Medici series, etc.).

Symbols which recur throughout his work appear here for the first time: clay pipes (associated with memories of lower New York, Chambers Street, and old houses near the water), glasses, engravings, mirrors, maps. The objects lend themselves to a fairly plausible interpretation: the egg as the symbol of life; the glass, the cradle of life; the four cylinders above are thought to represent his family, and the doll's head, himself. The moon, placed above the clay pipe, is both soap bubble and the world, and it controls the tides. In the catalogue for his exhibition at the Copley Galleries in 1948, Cornell wrote of the Soap Bubble Sets:

Shadow boxes become poetic theatres or settings wherein are metamorphosed the elements of a childhood pastime. The fragile, shimmering globules become the shimmering but more enduring planets—a connotation of moon and tides—the association of water less subtle, as when driftwood pieces make up a proscenium to set off the dazzling white of seafoam and billowy cloud crystallized in a pipe of fancy.²

In the same catalogue, Cornell is listed as an American Surrealist, a label which has



(top) *Collage*. 1932. (center) *Soap Bubble Set*. 1936. (bottom) *Soap Bubble Set*. 1936. Photograph courtesy Wadsworth Atheneum.



persisted to this day. From the present vantage point, it hardly seems accurate or adequate; in its original context and at that time, he did draw his initial source of inspiration and ideas from the methods, if not the mannerisms, of the Surrealists. It was the stimulation of their presence during the formative years of his career that proved invaluable to him, as it did to so many of the younger artists then at work in New York. It is, however, primarily in the ideas of the Surrealist poets, rather than the hard-core painters, that we capture the imagery of Cornell.

The Surrealist poets realized that, in order to renovate poetic imagery, it would be necessary to free words from their customary role—that of description. The selection of the appropriate word, as a symbol, and its illogical juxtaposition with other words would act as a stimulus to the senses of the reader and would, in turn, arouse multiple images and associations, differing according to individual sensibility. Thus the function of the poem was, to Paul Éluard, “donner à voir” (to give sight).³ From this followed the Surrealist concept of revealing the object in its fullest depth by, as Éluard said, stripping it of its accepted roles and admitted physical properties, a process which Breton called the “crisis of the object”. In their efforts to make the dream concrete, the Surrealist poets concerned themselves with developing a vocabulary precise in form and color, shape and intent. It was this method that brought them close to the technique of the painter. Breton, in speaking of his thirty-word poem, *Fôret-noire*, which took him six months to write, said that he had to juggle the words to determine their proper associations with each other and with the words that were eliminated from the poem but figured in its composition.⁴

The emphasis on the object itself started around 1930: “an ‘external object’ constitutes a closed unity resistant to our imagination and our desire to alter it at whim. This unity and consistency are the essence of the object—a complex of fantasy and restraint, of desire and resistance, which possesses a material substance”.⁵ As Marcel Jean pointed out, the German word for object, *Gegenstand*, literally means counter-stand, resistance.⁶ The estrangement of the object, particularly its separation from the objects generally associated with it, became the basic technique of Surrealism. Paul Nougé speaks of the Surrealist as painting the “bewildering object and the accidental encounter...by isolating the object...breaking off its ties with the rest of the world...We may cut off a hand and place it on the table or we may paint the image of a cut-off hand on the wall”.⁷ It is noteworthy that the emergence of the object coincided with Cornell’s beginnings as an artist. Although Giacometti, Dali, Ernst, Breton and Tanguy were among the many producers of objects, and both Schwitters and Duchamp, the latter with his portable museum, the *Green Box* of 1934, tended to box configuration, it was Cornell’s selection of the box as a form, in combination with the object, which proved a major innovation. It was Cornell who made the box memorable as a realm for both a real and imagined existence.

The first one-man show of Cornell to receive some notice in the press (it is actually debatable as to which of the shows, in 1932 or 1939, should be called the first one-man show) opened on December 6, 1939 at the Julien Levy Gallery. The press release for the show states that his objects “derive from a completely pure subconscious poetry unmixed with any attempt to shock or surprise. They are essentially pure creation, no professionalism, no ulterior motive but the concrete expression of Cornell’s personal lyricism. They are useless for any purpose except to delight the eye and everyone’s desire for a lovable object...”. *Art News* of December 23, 1939, commented: “Much, if not all, is done with mirrors...and the reflections

which do not have the aid of quick-silver are images drawn from the unconscious". The objects were placed in a darkened room; they included... "bubble pipes, thimbles and china dolls showered with confetti, in and out of shadow boxes... birds, books and balls suspended on strings, and its strange alchemy of bottles, artificial green leaves and bits of broken glass." The *New York Times* of December 10, 1939, mentioned a... "whirling eyeball under a bell jar, or a book which is a box in which things slide and kaleidoscope...". There were even objects which, like a music box, played tunes. The *New York Herald Tribune* of December 10, 1939, described the show as a "holiday toy shop of art for sophisticated enjoyment, and intriguing as well as amusing".

In addition to the pieces on exhibit, Cornell built objects to order, for Christmas gifts, incorporating the photograph of the purchaser into the object. Approximately five inches high, six inches wide and one inch deep, these "daguerreotypes", forerunners of the later sandboxes featured the photo, tinted deep blue or brown, secured against the rear wall of the box. Placed over the photo but not touching it was a tinted mirror which Cornell cut to silhouette the form in the photograph. Between these two layers, particles of colored sand, slivers of glass and tiny seashells created ever-changing patterns as the box was manipulated. The image of the spectator, trapped in the mirror's reflection, became a part of the object, establishing, at an early date, Cornell's awareness of the physical presence of the spectator, the relationship between the spectator, the object, and the space between.

If much of the 1930's was a time of tentative beginnings, the forties was witness to a number of major innovations. Characteristic of much of the early years is a feeling for Victoriana—for quaint beauties, elegant fabrics and exotic papers—a recapitulation of the "objects" of the thirties. Often a work is accompanied by a saying (*Francesca de Rimini*), a poem (*Taglioni's Jewel Casket*, in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art), descriptive matter (*Cléo de Mérode*), or some other "leitmotif", or, more rarely, it becomes part of the form itself (*Mémoires inédits de Mme. la Comtesse de G.*). In an effort to secure the fleeting, Cornell seems to have wanted to document and annotate, "to make a monument to every moment".⁸

In the majority of these early boxes, there is a definite distinction between the container and the contained. Some, like *Francesca de Rimini* or *Swan Lake for Tamara Toumanova*, resemble his early flat collage assembled in depth. Others are table-top, horizontal boxes, often lidded, suggesting a jewel box, a sewing box, a cosmetic case, a place to store treasures, a Pandora's box. *L'Egypte de Mlle. Cléo de Mérode: Cours Élémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle* is typical of this type. The interior, with its rows of bottles and side compartments, recalls the display cases of a museum or a department store. The box, a Victorian oak writing or strong box, contains a piece of glass mounted about one and a half inches from the bottom which acts as a supporting rack for the bottles. Underneath the glass is a layer of red sand with a few broken bits—a small piece of comb, slivers of plain or frosted glass and a porcelain doll's hand broken at the elbow. Much of the interior is covered with an ivory paper delicately marbled in brown and blue and framed by bands of marbled paper in blue, blue-grey, ivory and orange spots. All but one of the glass bottles bear a label and contain different objects. A description of one of the bottles gives some idea of its contents: *Sauterelles* (grasshoppers or locusts) contains a cut-out of two camels and bedouins from an old photograph of the Pyramids and a small green ball, both set in yellow sand.

Cléo de Mérode was a famous ballerina in the 1890's. The goddess Hathor, pictured

on the inside lid, is the goddess of love, happiness, dancing and music, also goddess of the sky. Cléo in the title is also Cleopatra of Egypt. The composition of the box can be paralleled to the Egyptian involvement with the tomb and the afterlife, to the custom of securing in the tomb the articles most required by the deceased in his life after death, as well as a description of the individual's life as he lived it on earth. It suggests, as well, the structuring of life into registers on the wall reliefs of the tombs. Simultaneously, the objects offer clues to the essence and mystery of Woman, whether Cléo de Mérode or Cleopatra.

The transition from this work to the masterpiece of the early forties, the *Medici Slot Machine* of 1942, is both rapid and profound in its implications. The image of the young boy, Moroni's *Portrait of a Young Prince of the Este Family*, in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, is viewed as if through a gun-sight or lens, telescoping both near and far distances simultaneously. The spiral at his feet evokes multiple associations: in the natural world, ocean currents form a spiral pattern; the growth of many plants is that of a spiral—for example, the way rose petals unfold—as is the structure of a chromosome. The spiral, symbolic of life repeating itself in a cycle of seasons and a cycle of generations, is also an abstract form, bringing with it references to Duchamp and Leonardo. The complex play of imagery, sequentially strung out (or spliced) like a series of film clips, with the implication of movement both in time and in space, reconstructs the history of a Renaissance prince and juxtaposes these images of his imaginary childhood (diagrams of the Palatine fashioned from pieced-together Baedeker maps, etc.), with current objects (marbles and jacks) so that the Renaissance child becomes a very real and contemporary child, alive and very much in the present. The objects are brought into reality with color, while the monochromatic images recede into the past.

The influence of film techniques on his art, and the actual translation and incorporation of its devices into his constructions, was another major innovation which he has developed and elaborated on since its early inception in the *Medici Slot Machine*, and one which has proven of enormous significance to many younger artists. Cornell's interest in the films originated in the twenties when he, like the Surrealists, found that it offered new possibilities of fantasy and illusion, abrupt changes in time, sequence and event, and illogical juxtapositions. Cornell made several movies, the earliest in the thirties, by re-editing and collaging discarded film clips and occasionally having a sequence shot. In a comment published in *View* magazine, on Hedy Lamarr, a Marilyn Monroe of the day, Cornell wrote of the "Profound and suggestive power of the silent film to evoke an ideal world of beauty, to release unexpected floods of music from the gaze of the human countenance in its prison of silver light . . . evanescent fragments unexpectedly encountered".⁹ A shy and secluded man, his limited travels have permitted him great freedom of the imagination, the ability to leap back and forth in time, to visualize places, events, and people never seen. His sources, whether movie queen or Medici prince, marble or jack, are lifted out of context and placed in a timeless world, the world of the dream. The sensation of disorientation, of the unexpected encounters between his "objects" recalls de Chirico:

One must picture everything in the world as an enigma, not only the great questions one has always asked oneself—why the world was created, why we are born, live and die, for after all, perhaps there is no reason in all of this. But rather to understand the enigma of things generally considered insignificant, to perceive the mystery of certain phenomena of feeling, of the character of

a people, even to arrive at the point where one can picture the creative geniuses of the past as things, very strange things that we examine from all sides,¹⁰

In the *Medici Slot Machine*, space is cubistically fragmented into small facets which co-mingle, separate and fuse again in kaleidoscopic effect. The black lines which crisscross the surface act as connective tissue organizing both the multiple images and the several spatial levels. This diagrammatic pattern of horizontals and verticals, superimposed on the surface rather than functioning as the substructure for the image, creates a sense of order and calm that might best be described as early Renaissance. The emphasis on the object as a literary symbol, in an earlier work like the *Cléo de Mérode*, gradually gives way to the object as both symbol and plastic form, and finds its first realization in the *Medici Slot Machine*.

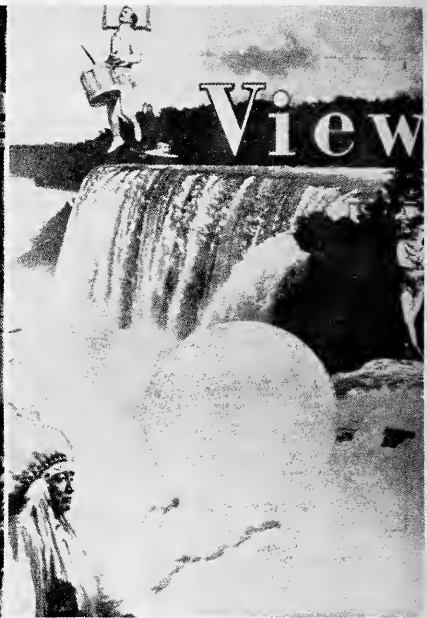
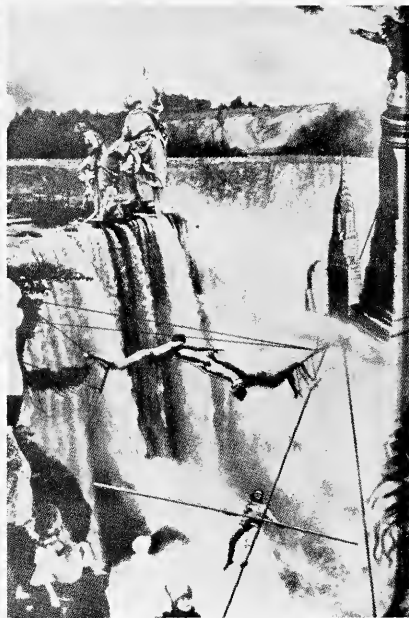
The numbers on the side wall of the box refer to the title of the construction and to the element of play. Cornell's comments for his *Penny Arcade Portrait of Lauren Bacall*, exhibited in 1946, reveal his fascination for the game:

...impressions intriguingly diverse...that, in order to hold fast, one might assemble, assort, and arrange into a cabinet...the contraption kind of the amusement resorts with endless ingenuity of effect, worked by coin and plunger, or brightly colored pin-balls...traveling inclined runways...starting in motion compartment after compartment with a symphony of mechanical magic of sight and sound borrowed from the motion picture art...into childhood...into fantasy...through the streets of New York...through tropical skies...etc...into the receiving trays the balls come to rest releasing prizes...¹¹

It would be difficult to imagine a more startling contrast to the elusive and even melancholy prince than the *Pantry Ballet for Jacques Offenbach* of the same year, or the later, equally light-hearted *Swan Lake for Tamara Toumanova* of 1945, or *La Favorite* of 1948. Yet they represent a counterpoint to the main body of work, and play an important, if subsidiary, role during the 1940's. Here, references to theater abound, whether to the stage sets of the theater or ballet or to the court pagentry of Watteau. Delicately frivolous in spirit, they also invoke reminiscences of a child's cardboard theater or a fairy tale. Red plastic lobsters cavort gaily about with their partners, little silver spoons, while seashells and crockery nod in merry enjoyment. Elsewhere, feathers accompany a swan in the midst of a performance and sheet music graces the exterior of a box, in which an angel is playing, in a world of lyric enchantment.

For *The Crystal Cage: Portrait of Berenice*, a series of collages and related documents published in the "Americana Fantastica" issue of *View* magazine of January 1943, Cornell established in a word portrait of the Pagode de Chanteloupe, a chinoiserie of the late nineteenth century, his interests of this and of all times:

Mozart, sunbursts, Baedeker, Piero di Cosimo, Hans Christian Andersen, daguerreotypes, balloon, Edgar Allen Poe, shooting stars, Hôtel de l'Ange, soap bubbles, solariums, snow, Gulliver, Carpaccio, phases of the moon, star-lit field, palaces of light, tropical plumage, Liszt, barometers, Queen Mab, owls, magic



The Crystal Cage. Collage, View Magazine, January 1943.

Americana Fantastica. View Magazine, cover, January 1943.

lanterns, Milky Way, Vermeer, camera obscura, Seurat, Erik Satie, calliopes, Gilles, cycloramas, castles, Rimbaud.¹²

It is a world of tender innocence, a world that is replaced in the fifties by a melancholy and sophisticated, but still innocent spirit.

Both the *Medici Slot Machine* and the *Soap Bubble Set* of 1936 are ideas that Cornell has developed over the years in constructions which are not radically different from their original premise. They are a reprise of a theme worked out over many years, in contrast to another type—a “theme and variations”—such as the *Aviary*, *Dovecote*, and *Observatory* series, which took shape in a relatively short and concentrated time span. Within the first category the progression from a *Medici* boy of the forties to one of the fifties is a distillation of a rich and elaborate imagery to one of the utmost simplicity. In the second type of series the constructions have a much greater consistency of expression but vary in their imagery from construction to construction. A certain amount of confusion has developed with regard to the serial elaboration or “duplication” of his boxes and the attendant difficulties of dating. The dating problem is admittedly severe but no more so than in the working procedure of any artist who returns to his canvases or sculpture and reworks them over a period of years. Cornell has transferred this procedure—a continuation of a visual process—from one box to another rather than reworking his boxes over and over again (although he does this too). The idea of *duplication*, per se, did not originate with Cornell, for Arp, in 1918-19, made a practice of tracing the same drawing over and over again with variations occurring automatically. It is a premise contained in Dada (one need only think of Duchamp’s *Ready-mades*, and of Surrealist automatism), if not realized in its fullest sense. The use of the repetitive image represents a change in *process* on the part of the twentieth-century artist; it is Cornell who recognized it as such and gave it its first viable plastic expression.

His working method offers ample explanation for the impulse propelling the use of

the repeat: an initial idea is supplemented by "documents"—both original material and notes—which takes visual shape after a long period of gestation. Cornell has often spoken of the frustrations of the medium and of his ability to encompass all the extra-visual material (poetic, emotional and other ephemera) that went into its making. The duplication or elaboration of a theme becomes a way of working *out of* an obsession—a natural consequence of the Surrealist belief in taking the inner imagination rather than the outer world as a starting point and the multitude of possibilities this suggests. Once brought into existence, the boxes appear to act upon one another establishing a familial relationship, through the reiteration of certain objects (driftwood, seashells, cordial glasses, nails, stamps, toy blocks, bubble pipes, etc., and especially photographs and forms—circles, cubes, spirals, arcs) which take on added reverberations over the years and establish a physical displacement in time.

The implications of the repetitive image, which began with the *Medici Slot Machine* in 1942, are given another definition in the *Multiple Cubes* of 1946-48, one of Cornell's earliest explorations into total abstraction, with connotations of both Mondrian's grid paintings and Duchamp's readymade, *Why not sneeze?* of 1921. The photographic images of the Medici box are metamorphosed into white wooden cubes which move freely about in their separate cubicles, a series of compartments created by a skeleton of horizontal strips bisected by smaller vertical ones. This grid structure, an extension of the reticulated black lines superimposed on the Medici boy, functions here in a purely plastic context.

In these and related constructions, Cornell was undoubtedly influenced by Mondrian, whom he knew in New York in the early forties. Robert Motherwell speaks of Mondrian's "formulation of color relations and space relations arising from a division of space. He uses color and space to communicate feeling... a definite and specific and concrete poetry breaks through his bars..."¹³ Cornell's works of the fifties bear affinities to Mondrian in their classic purity, in their chromatic restriction to white as the predominating color with the primaries blue and yellow as important components, and in their breakdown of space. Both approach geometry through sensibility, but the differences between the two artists are great. Cornell conveys a physical sense of space, in a three-dimensional structure, by overlapping planes and the use of diminishing forms. He loves the irregular surface or edge, the curve, the sphere; he uses natural and man-made forms and representations of the figure. His boxes are infused with a light that goes back beyond Mondrian—to Vemeer, or to Piero della Francesca. It appears to be, in Cornell's case, an intuitive process in which he grasped certain essentials of Mondrian's art, adapted them to his own needs, and fused them with his own highly developed poetic imagery.

The very narrow depth of the *Multiple Cubes* prevents too much of a reading in space and tends to flatten out a very real depth into a pictorial one. Cornell is a master at this sleight-of-hand, for *Nouveaux Contes de Fées*, of around the same time, restates this idea in another context. The pattern of the paper which caresses the surface of the box blurs the distinction between the three-dimensional box and the two-dimensional paper.

In December 1949 Cornell showed twenty-six constructions, based on the Aviary theme, at the Egan gallery. These new works "of sunbleached and white-washed boxes filled with drawers and birds and little springs and mirrors have a strict honesty, a concentration on texture and ordering of space..."¹⁴ that continued the direction initiated by the *Multiple Cubes*. The earlier interest in literary detail disappears in favor of an abstract arrangement of forms, a play of line, volume and shape that is breathtaking in its beauty and simplicity. In these works Cornell moved away from Surrealism in a manner similar to

that of the Abstract Expressionists who grew out of Surrealism. It is from the time of this show that the literary becomes subsumed into the abstract.

Both *Deserted Perch* of 1949 and *Chocolat Menier* are notable for incorporating emptiness into the work—the vacuum of an action that has occurred, of birds that have flown from the cage. The mood of loneliness and futility in *Chocolat Menier* is established by the worn and bare wood, the rusting chain supporting the perch, and the slivers of mirror, pitted and chipped away at the edges, waiting to catch the reflection of the departed bird and catching, instead, only the reflection of the spectator and another more jagged mirror. In a less violent mood, a few feathers in the *Deserted Perch* suggest the missing bird. Color is almost non-existent, kept to small touches in the use of print, string and feathers. The austerity of these aviaries is offset by other constructions in which the birds play a lively and colorful role.

Forgotten Game restates the game idea but includes the movement of a ball on a runway accompanied by its own sounds as it descends. Cornell was very early in incorporating sound, light and movement within the dimensions of a construction. The geometric simplicity in the precise repeat of the diminishing circles is offset by the peeling surface which surrounds it, recalling old walls. He often speaks fondly of buildings in the process of demolition, finding beauty in the fading colors, in the warmth of human association, and in the fragments of decay and destruction. In this he echoes Schwitters; both have a fascination for the “found” object, for collecting bits of glass, threads, old papers, labels and other “trivia” from life. Cornell’s love for remnants of human use, weathering, and craftsmanship is incorporated very sparingly into his constructions, organized into formal relationships by means of compartments and the use of one predominating color—usually white.

Compared with the “Aviary” theme, the works of 1950-53 (*Observatories*, *Night Skies*, *Hotels*) are richer, more sensual and more painterly, while retaining the haunting and poetic mood of the bird cages. These are hotel lobbies such as Colette might write about, and yet they are not literary. They have both a great clarity of image, a dreamstate of unreality, of atmosphere and emotion. The surfaces are coated with thick white paint. Placed with an impeccable sense of order are glasses, shattered and whole, wire mesh, mirrors, labels of far-away places, and sky charts. Into an aperture cut into the rear wall, Cornell often places astrological maps which revolve and change their image, or windows looking out on star-studded skies. Subtle placements of pilasters, columns, columnettes, windows and mirrors convey a shorthand version of deep Renaissance perspective, of the kind one might apprehend from an *illustration* of a Renaissance monument rather than from the monument itself. His frequent use of mirrors suggests Saint Pol-Roux, a poet considered by the Surrealists as one of the precursors, who wrote of the poet as possessing the magical powers of a Merlin who can change a world of innumerable objects into wonders by the use of an inner mirror: “I acquired, then, a fabulous mirror that makes you see within”. This enabled the poet to reach “the isle of the inside of my being.”¹⁵

The theme for Cornell’s show in 1955 at the Stable gallery was “Winter Night Skies”, a series of constructions referring to the constellations Auriga, Andromeda and Cameleopardalis. While related to the earlier *Hotels* in both theme and structure, these works take as their departure an even more painterly and two-dimensional approach. The recent series of collages are a natural outgrowth of this direction toward the two-dimensional. They restate, in new terms, his earlier collages of the thirties, the series that he did for *View* magazine in the forties, and the use of collage over the years in many of his constructions.

In speaking of a frame for one of his collages, Cornell mentioned that he wanted a Victorian frame to "take it out of this time". Indeed, the frame of each construction is considered in relation to its contents. The idea of the box as a frame establishes an awareness of the frontality of the images and, in this sense, the work enters the domain of painting. The frames themselves, with their carefully missing corners, the over-all attention to the surface of the box, and the very real existence of the objects contained within, re-situate the work within the context of the sculptural. His space is the illusionistic space of a painter, re-created in three-dimensional terms. One thinks of painters, particularly Vermeer, in relation to Cornell. It is this ability to maintain a dialectical tension between the painterly and the sculptural that is unique to his work.

All of his objects are as carefully considered as his frames and many of them are reworked, altering their original condition—glass is usually tinted: nails, cork balls, driftwood, and toy blocks are painted, as are maps and charts; old print from books, which often covers the exposed surfaces of his boxes, is usually stained in tints of blue, green or brown. Tenderness and despair, poignancy and loneliness are locked into each compartment, changing within each box and from box to box. Fantasy and architectural constructivism exist side by side in a world where knowledge alternates with the innocent wonder of a child. The slightest scrap of paper sets off an endless chain of associations, both emotional and visual, and a paper parrot brings to life a hotel lobby full of sounds and movement, sumptuous wallpaper, and brass cages filled with brilliant birds. His work is deeply personal and ultimately elusive, never divulging the mystery of its existence.

NOTES

1. Marcel Jean, *The History of Surrealist Painting*, New York, Grove Press, 1960, p. 219.
2. Text, Copley Galleries, Beverly Hills, September 28, 1948, *Joseph Cornell: Objects*.
3. Anna Balakian, *Surrealism: The Road to the Absolute*, New York, The Noonday Press, 1959, p. 115.
4. *Ibid*, p. 117.
5. Marcel Jean, *op. cit.*, p. 227.
6. *Ibid*, p. 243.
7. Julien Levy, *Surrealism*, New York, The Black Sun Press, 1936, p. 22.
8. Howard Griffin, "Auriga. Andromeda. Cameleopardalis", *Art News*, New York, vol. 86, no. 8, December 1957, p. 63.
9. *View*, New York, Series 1, nos. 9-10, 1942, p. 3.
10. Marcel Jean, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
11. Text, Hugo Gallery, New York, December 1946, *Portraits of Women: Constructions and Arrangements by Joseph Cornell*.
12. "Americana Fantastica", *View*, New York, Series 2, no. 4, January 1943, p. 11.
13. Robert Motherwell, "Notes on Mondrian and Chirico", *VVV*, New York, no. 1, June 1942, pp. 59-60.
14. T.B.H. [Thomas B. Hess], Review of exhibition at the Egan Gallery, *Art News*, New York, vol. 48, no. 9, January 1950, p. 45.
15. Anna Balakian, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

***UNTITLED. 1931.**

Collage, 4½ x 5¾".

Lent by Richard Feigen Gallery, New York.

UNTITLED. 1933.

Object, ½ x 1¼" (diameter).

Lent by Richard Feigen Gallery, New York.

UNTITLED. c. 1933.

Object, 1 x 2¾" (diameter).

Lent by Richard Feigen Gallery, New York.

UNTITLED. c. 1933.

Object, 2¼ x 2" (diameter).

Lent by Richard Feigen Gallery, New York.

BLACK HUNTER. 1939.

Construction, 11⅞ x 8 x 2¾".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

***SOAP BUBBLE SET. 1939.**

Construction, 14 x 9 x 2⅛".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

VARIÉTÉ DE MINÉRALOGIE. 1939.

Construction, 9¼ x 14¼ x 2".

Collection James Merrill, Stonington, Connecticut.

MÉMOIRES INÉDITS DE MADAME LA

COMTESSE DE G. c. 1939.

Construction, 2 x 4⅛" (diameter).

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Feigen, New York.

FRANCESCA DE RIMINI. 1940.

Construction, 14⅜ x 10¼ x 2⅝".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

***L'ÉGYPT DE MLLE. CLÉO DE MÉRODE: COURS
ELEMENTAIRE D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE. 1940.**

Construction, 7¼ x 10⅝ x 2⅞".

Private collection.

UNTITLED (RED SANDBOX). c. 1940.

Construction, 4½ x 10⅝ x 2⅞".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Feigen, New York.

***MEDICI SLOT MACHINE. 1942.**

Construction, 15½ x 12 x 4⅜".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis, New York.

A PANTRY BALLET FOR JACQUES OFFENBACH.

December 1942.

Construction, 10½ x 14 x 4".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Bernard J. Reis, New York.

***PHARMACY. 1943.**

Construction, 15¼ x 12 x 3⅛".

Collection Mrs. Marcel Duchamp, New York.

***FOR THE SYLPHIDE LUCILLE GRAHAM. 1945.**

Construction, 4¾ x 4¾ x 1½".

Collection University of St. Thomas,
Jermaine MacAgy Collection, Houston.

SHADOW BOX. 1945.

Construction, 10½ x 13½ x 2".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Howard Barnstone, Houston.

***MUSEUM. 1945-47.**

Construction, 8⅝ x 7 x 2¼".

Collection University of St. Thomas,
Jermaine MacAgy Collection, Houston.

A SWAN LAKE FOR TAMARA TOUMANOVA. 1946.

Construction, 9½ x 13 x 4".

Private collection.

PINK PALACE. 1946.

Construction, 10 x 15 x 3⅞".

Collection Sandy M. Campbell, New York.

***MULTIPLE CUBES. 1946-48.**

Construction, 14 x 10⅜ x 2¼".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

ENCRUSTED CLOWN

(SOUVENIRS FOR SINGLETON). 1948.

Construction, 17⅞ x 11¾ x 4¼".

Lent by the artist.

LA FAVORITE. 1948.

Construction, 10 x 8⅝ x 4⅝".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

*SOAP BUBBLE SET. 1948.

Construction, 9 x 13 x 3¾".

Collection Mrs. de Menocal Simpson, New York.

*NOUVEAUX CONTES DE FÉES
(POISON BOX). c. 1948.

Construction, 12⅞ x 10¼ x 5⅞".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

*DESERTED PERCH. 1949.

Construction, 16½ x 13 x 4".

Collection Jeanne Reynal, New York.

GARDEN. 1949.

Construction, 3½ x 7½" (diameter).

Collection Bernard Pfriem, New York.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE. 1949.

Construction, 18 x 11¾ x 3¾".

Collection Parker Tyler, New York.

FORGOTTEN GAME. c. 1949.

Construction, 21 x 15½ x 4".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

SANDBOX. c. 1949.

Construction, 11 x 8 x 3½".

Collection Jeanne Reynal, New York.

WEATHER PROPHET. c. 1949.

Construction, 18¼ x 11 x 5¼".

Lent by the artist.

*COCKATOO: KEEPSAKE PARAKEET. 1949-1953.

Construction, 20¼ x 12 x 5".

Collection Donald Windham, New York.

GRANDE HÔTEL SEMIRAMIS. 1950.

Construction, 18 x 12 x 4".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Allan Frumkin, New York.

OBSERVATORY. 1950.

Construction, 18 x 11⅞ x 5½".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

SOAP BUBBLE SET. 1950.

Construction, 9½ x 14½ x 3¾".

Collection Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Alpers, Los Angeles.

AVIARY. c. 1950.

Construction, 12 x 10 x 5½".

Collection Robert L. Isaacson, New York.

YELLOW CHAMBER. 1950-51.

Construction, 17¾ x 12¼ x 4⅞".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

HÔTEL DE L'ÉTOILE. early 1950's.

Construction, 17 x 8½ x 4".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Norman Borisoff,
Encino, California.

PARROT. early 1950's.

Construction, 19 x 11⅞ x 4½".

Lent by the artist.

*CARROUSEL. 1952.

Construction, 19½ x 13 x 6".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Morton G. Neumann, Chicago.

*CHOCOLAT MENIER. 1952.

Construction, 17 x 12 x 4¾".

Collection New York University Art Collection, New York.

*DOVECOTE. 1952.

Construction, 16⅞ x 11⅞ x 3⅞".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Maremont, Chicago.

*MEDICI PRINCESS. 1952.

Construction, 14 x 11 x 4".

Collection Margot Stewart, New York.

MEDICI PRINCE. c. 1952.

Construction, 14 x 11 x 4".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Shapiro,
Oak Park, Illinois.

MEDICI PRINCESS. c. 1952.

Construction, 14½ x 11 x 5".

Collection Jean Frumkin, New York.

SAND BOX. c. 1952.

Construction, 14 x 8⁵/₈ x 3¹/₄".

Collection H. Marc Moyens, Alexandria, Virginia.

*PAVILION. 1953.

Construction, 19 x 12 x 6¹/₂".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ferber, New York.

HÔTEL DU NORD. c. 1953.

Construction, 19 x 13¹/₄ x 5¹/₂".

Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

A PARROT FOR JUAN GRIS. 1953-54.

Construction, 17³/₄ x 12¹/₈ x 4¹/₈".

Lent by the artist.

*HÔTEL BON PORT (ANN IN MEMORY). 1954.

Construction, 13 x 10¹/₂ x 3¹/₄".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

*HÔTEL DE L'EUROPE:

OLGA CARINI AGUZZI. c. 1954.

Construction, 17 x 11 x 4".

Collection Mrs. Eleanor Ward, New York.

HÔTEL. 1955.

Construction, 17³/₄ x 10¹/₂ x 5¹/₂".

Lent by the artist.

MOND-OBERFLÄCHE. 1955.

Construction, 17 x 15⁵/₈ x 2³/₈".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Maremont, Chicago.

BÉBÉ. mid 1950's.

Construction, 14³/₄ x 9¹/₂ x 2¹/₈".

Lent by the artist.

BIRD. mid 1950's.

Construction, 13¹/₄ x 9⁵/₈ x 4⁷/₈".

Lent by the artist.

BOX WITH WINDOWS. mid 1950's.

Construction, 18¹/₈ x 12 x 4¹/₂".

Lent by the artist.

DISCARDED DESCARTES. mid 1950's.

Construction, 15 x 11 x 2³/₈".

Lent by the artist.

DOVECOTE-AMERICAN GOTHIC. mid 1950's.

Construction, 17⁵/₈ x 11⁵/₈ x 2⁵/₈".

Lent by the artist.

MÉLISANDE. mid 1950's.

Construction, 18¹/₄ x 12 x 6".

Lent by the artist.

OWL. mid 1950's.

Construction, 11⁵/₈ x 8¹/₄ x 5".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

PORTRAIT. mid 1950's.

Construction, 15³/₄ x 12 x 3⁷/₈".

Lent by the artist.

*HOMAGE TO BLÉRIOT. 1956.

Construction, 18¹/₂ x 11¹/₄ x 4³/₄".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bergman, Chicago.

SAND FOUNTAIN. 1956.

Construction, 11 x 8 x 4".

Collection Mrs. Eleanor Ward, New York.

VIA PARMIGIANINO (FOR ALLEGRA). 1956.

Construction, 12¹/₄ x 8³/₈ x 3³/₈".

Lent by the artist.

*SUN BOX. c. 1956.

Construction, 10¹/₈ x 15¹/₄ x 3¹/₈".

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Alvin S. Lane, Riverdale, New York.

*HÔTEL DE L'ÉTOILE. c. 1956-57.

Construction, 18¹/₂ x 14 x 7³/₈".

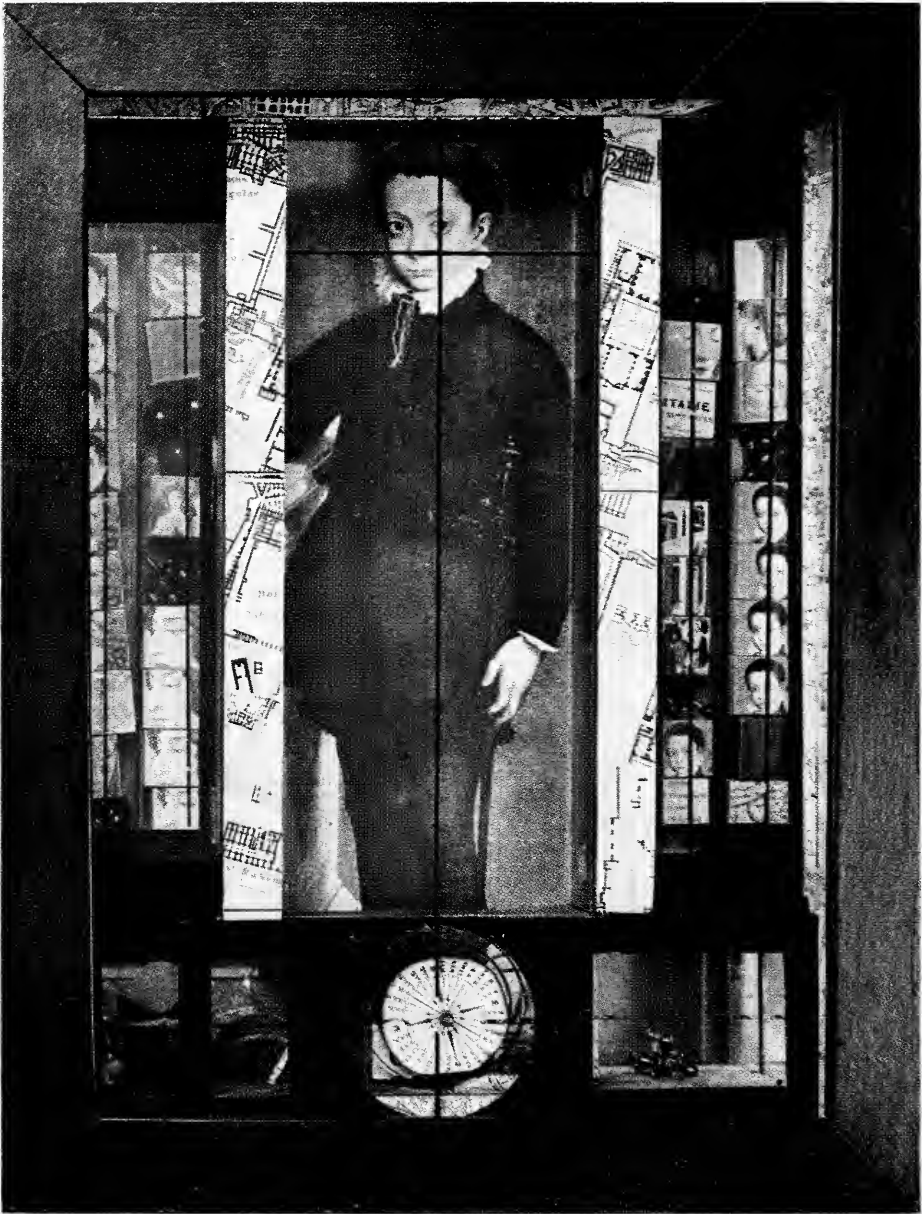
Collection Mrs. Eleanor Ward, New York.

*LA BOULE D'OR. 1957.

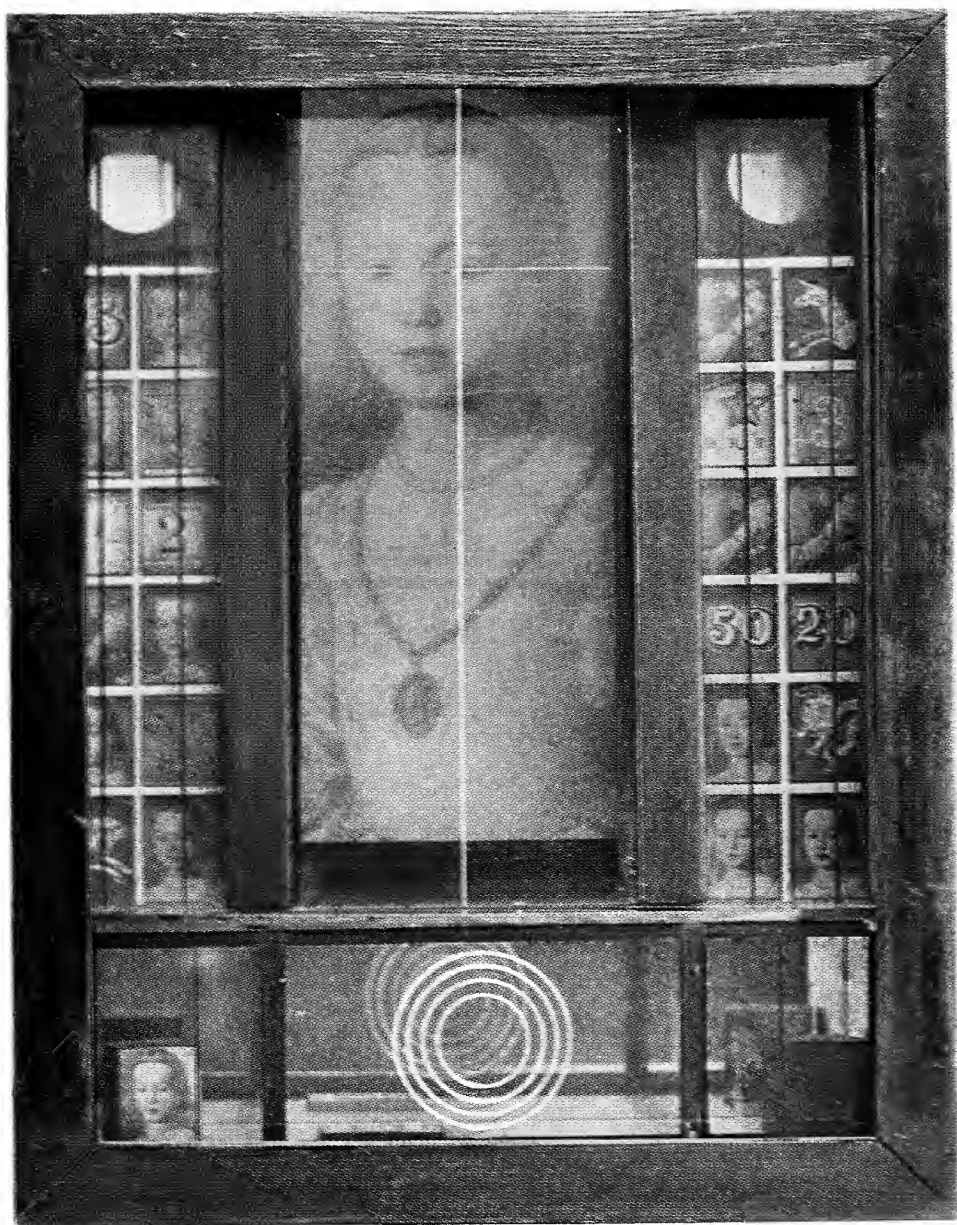
Construction, 15¹/₂ x 10¹/₂ x 4".

Private collection.

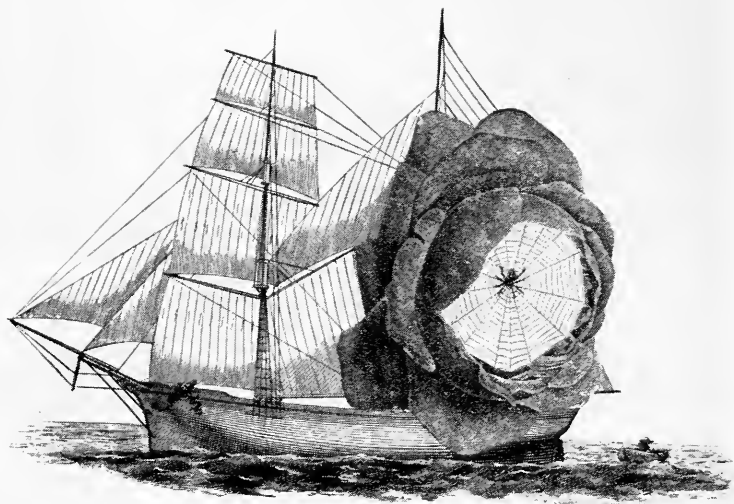
- SUZY'S ROOM. 1957.
Construction, $17\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by The Pace Gallery, New York.
- *SUITE DE LA LONGITUDE. c. 1957.
Construction, $13\frac{1}{2} \times 19\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection.
- LUNAR LEVEL NO. 1. 1958.
Construction, $9 \times 12 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection.
- TRADE WINDS. c. 1958.
Construction, $14\frac{1}{2} \times 16 \times 4$ ".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. David M. Solinger, New York.
- HÔTEL DU CHARIOT D'OR. late 1950's.
Construction, $14 \times 9 \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Private collection.
- RATTLE AND MUSIC BOX. late 1950's.
Construction, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{8} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$ ".
Collection University of St. Thomas,
Jermayne MacAgy Collection, Houston.
- SAND BOX. late 1950's.
Construction, $13\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{8} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ ".
Collection Jon N. Streep, Amsterdam.
- SAND BOX. late 1950's.
Construction, $15\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{3}{8}$ ".
Collection Jon N. Streep, Amsterdam.
- *SAND FOUNTAIN. late 1950's.
Construction, $10\frac{7}{8} \times 8 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection.
- SPACE OBJECT BOX. late 1950's.
Construction, $11\frac{1}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- *UNTITLED. c. 1960.
Construction, $9\frac{3}{4} \times 15 \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ ".
Private collection.
- FIGUREHEAD. 1960's.
Construction, $10\frac{1}{8} \times 17\frac{3}{8} \times 5$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- *INTERPLANETARY NAVIGATION. 1964.
Collage and watercolor, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter N. Pharr.
- THE STORM THAT NEVER CAME. 1964.
Collage, $11\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- CHERUBIM SWITCH. 1965.
Collage, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- GERALDINE FARRAR—"IN REMBERANCE". 1965.
Collage, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- MOZART-CASSIOPEIA. 1965.
Collage, $11\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- ANDRÉ BRETON. 1966.
Collage, $11\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- ICE. 1966.
Collage, $11\frac{3}{8} \times 8\frac{3}{8}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- THE SMILE IN THE GIFT SHOP. 1966.
Drawing, $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- UNTITLED. 1966.
Collage (with original drawing by Robert Cornell
c. 1935-39), $11\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- SPACE BOX. c. 1966.
Construction, $10\frac{1}{8} \times 15\frac{3}{8} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$ ".
Lent by the artist.
- CARROUSEL. 1967.
Collage, $11\frac{1}{8} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$ ".
Lent by the artist.

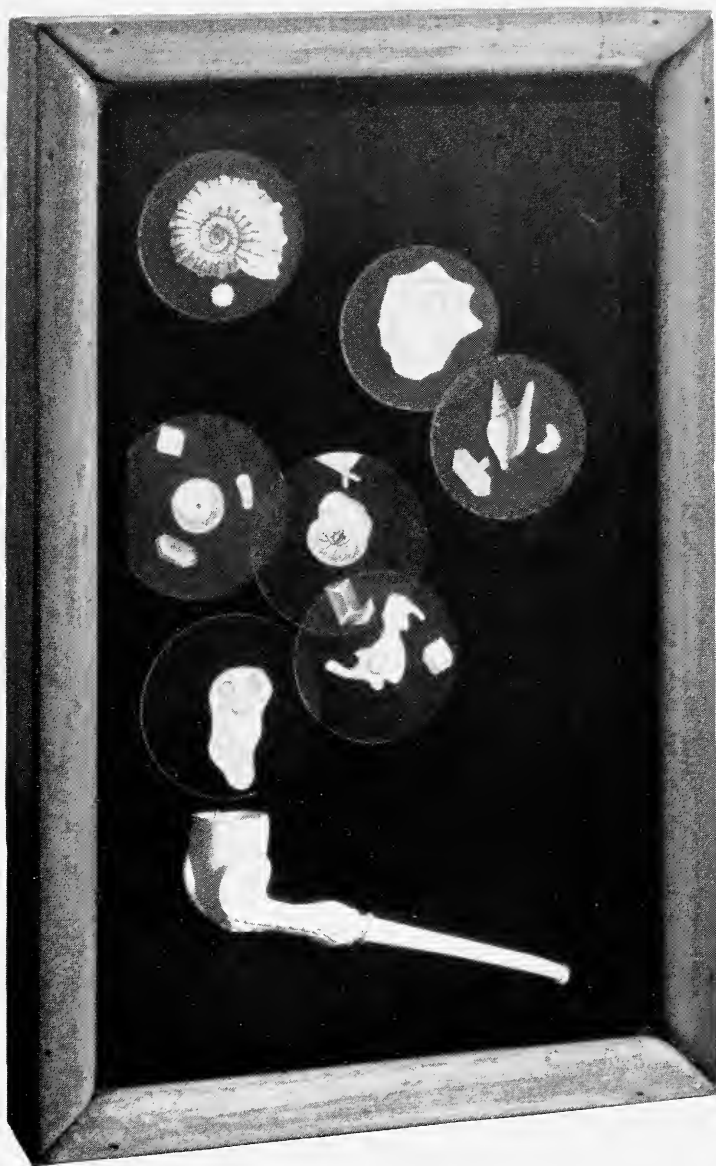


Medici Slot Machine, 1942.



Medici Princess, 1952.





Soap Bubble Set. 1939.



L'Égypte de Mlle. Cleo de Mérode: Cours Élémentaire D'Histoire Naturelle, 1940.

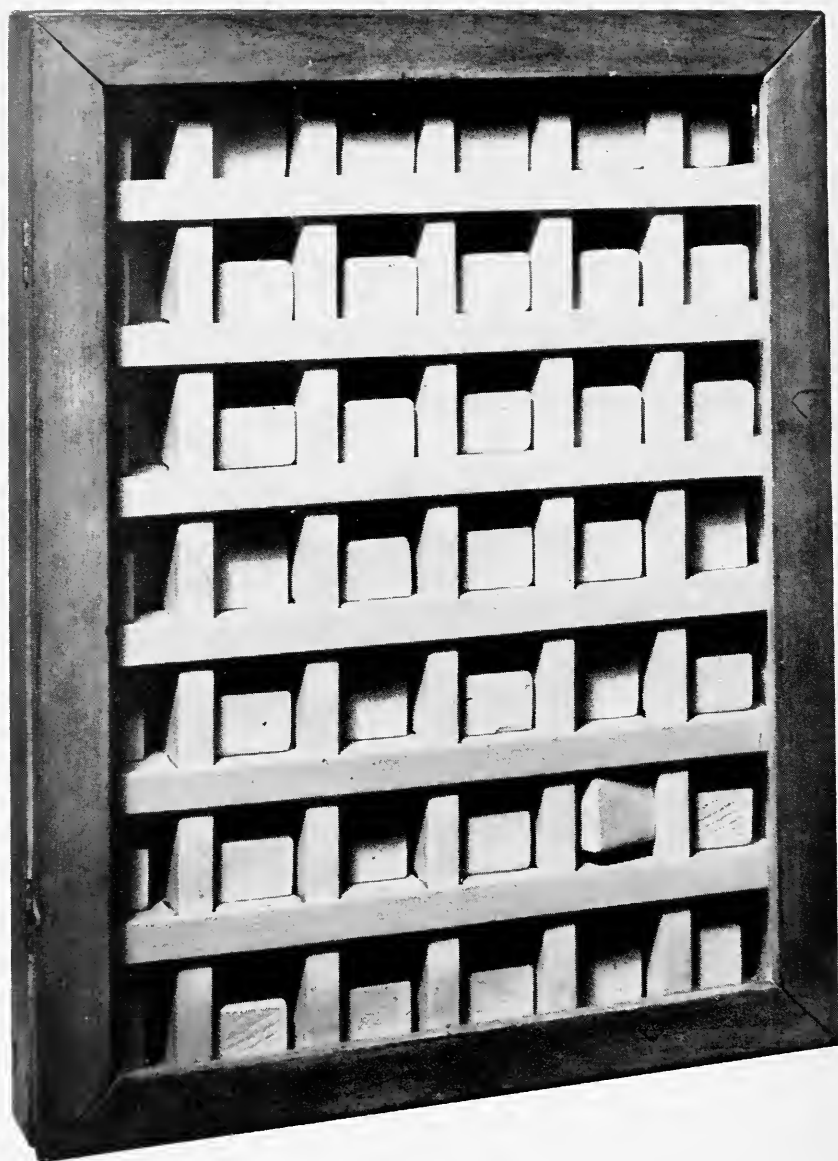


For the Sylphide Lucille Graham, 1945.

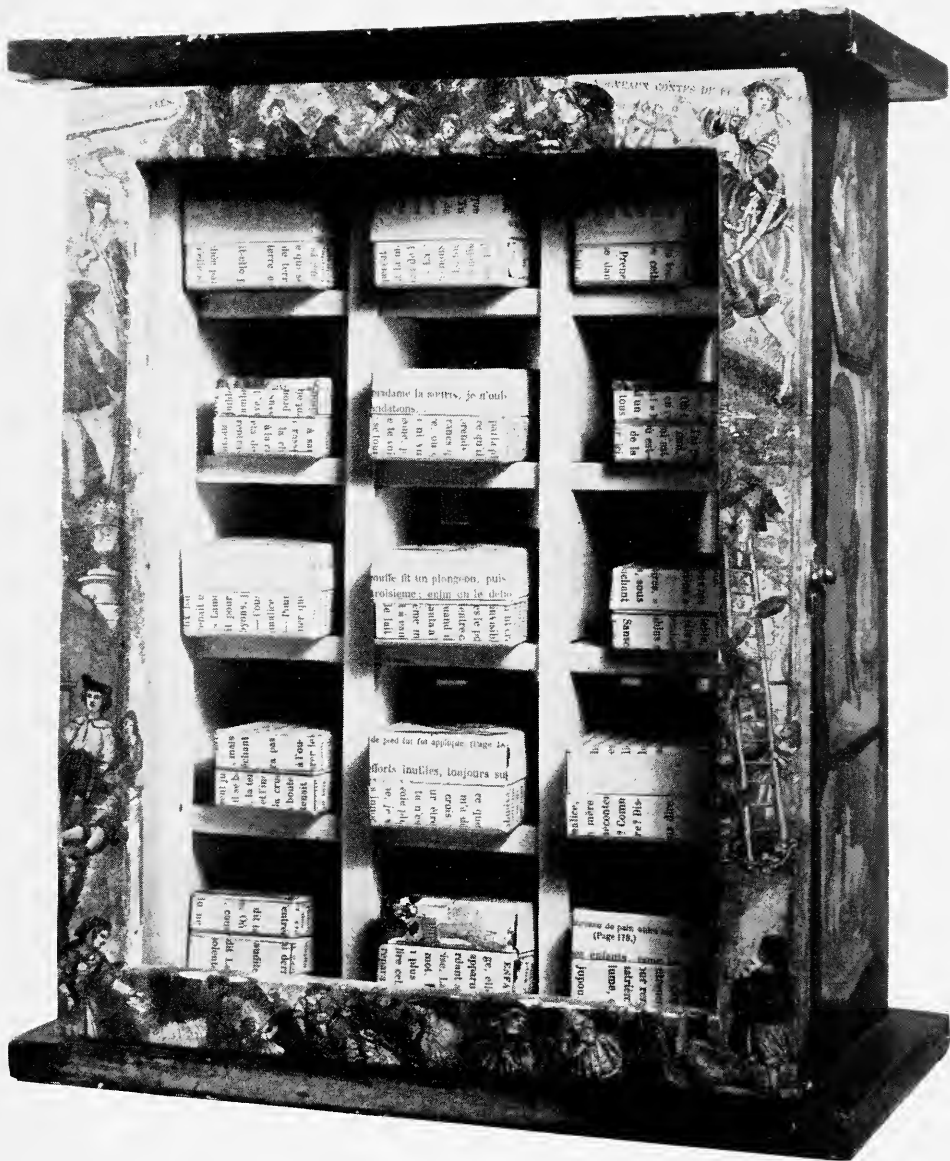


Pharmacy, 1943.

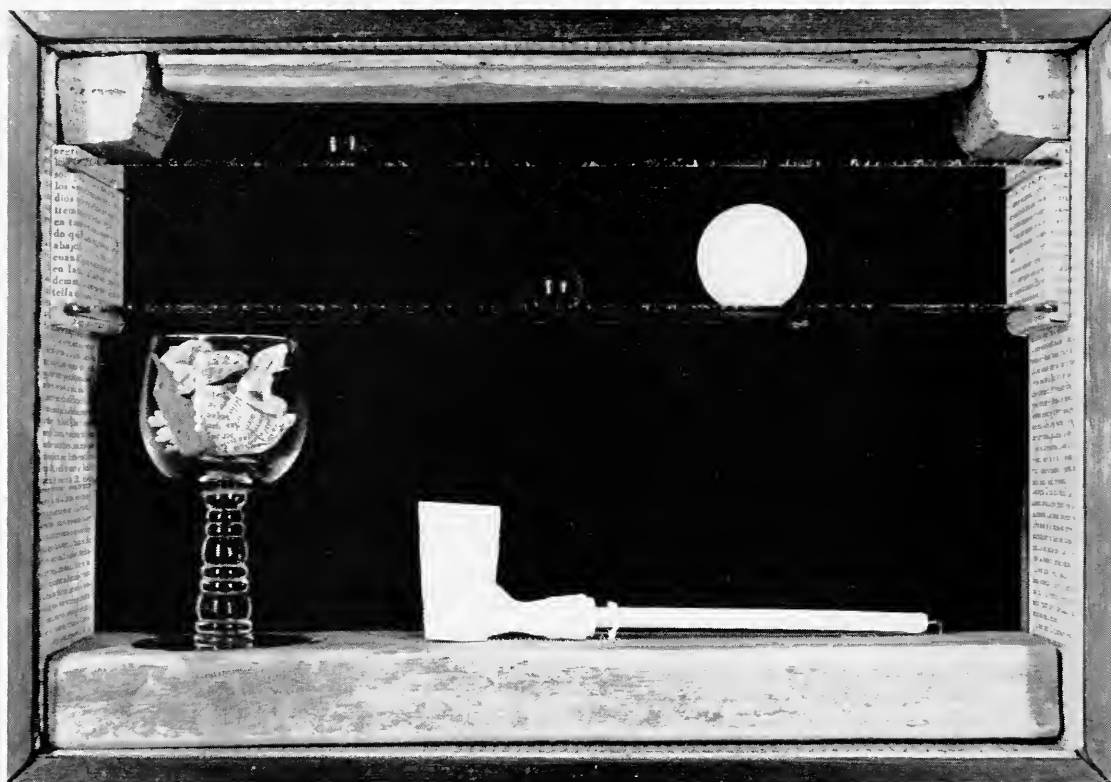




Multiple Cubes. 1946-48.



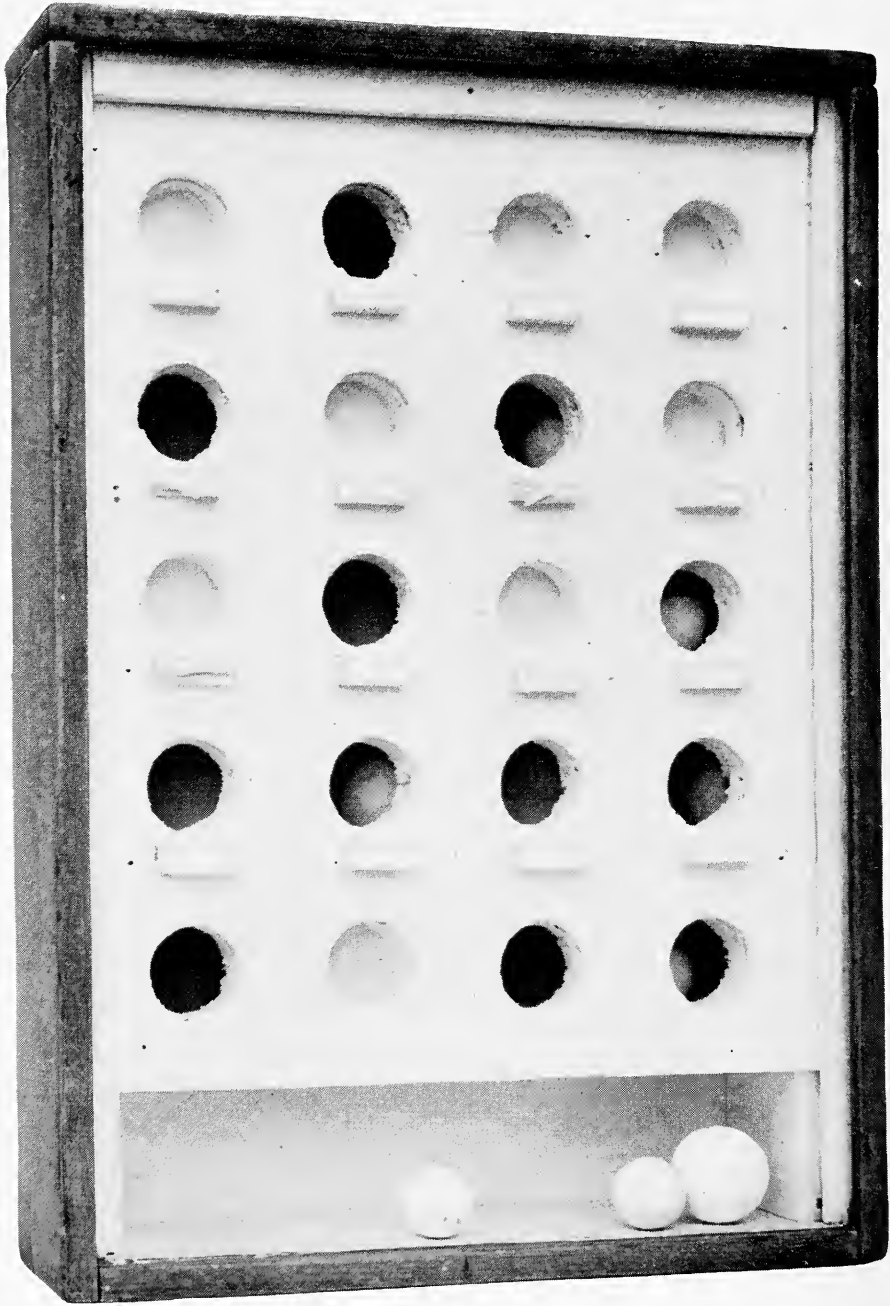
Nouveaux Contes de Fées. (Poison Box), c. 1948.



Soap Bubble Set, 1948.

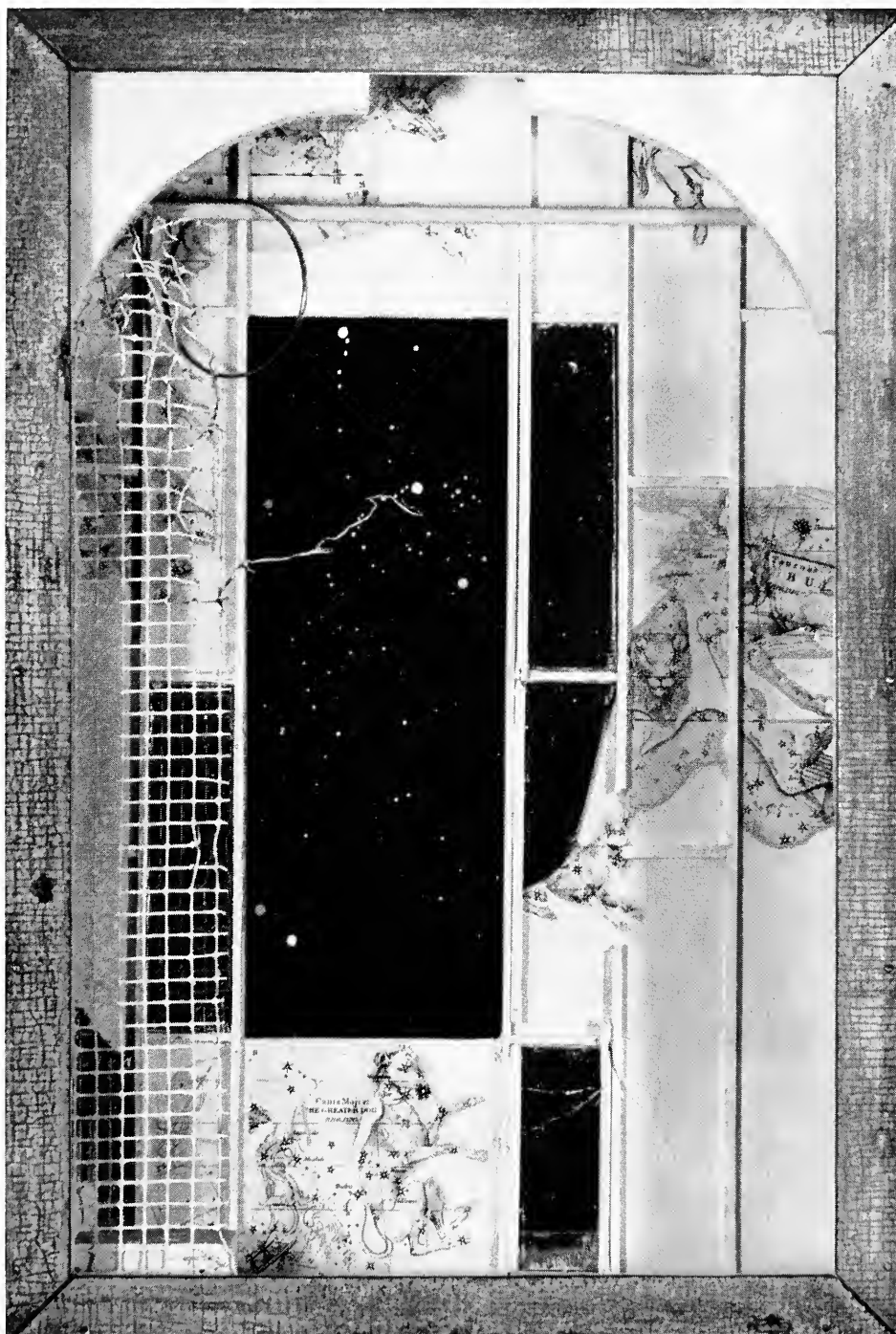


Deserted Perch, 1949.





Chocolat Menier. 1952.



Carrousel, 1952.



Pavilion, 1953.



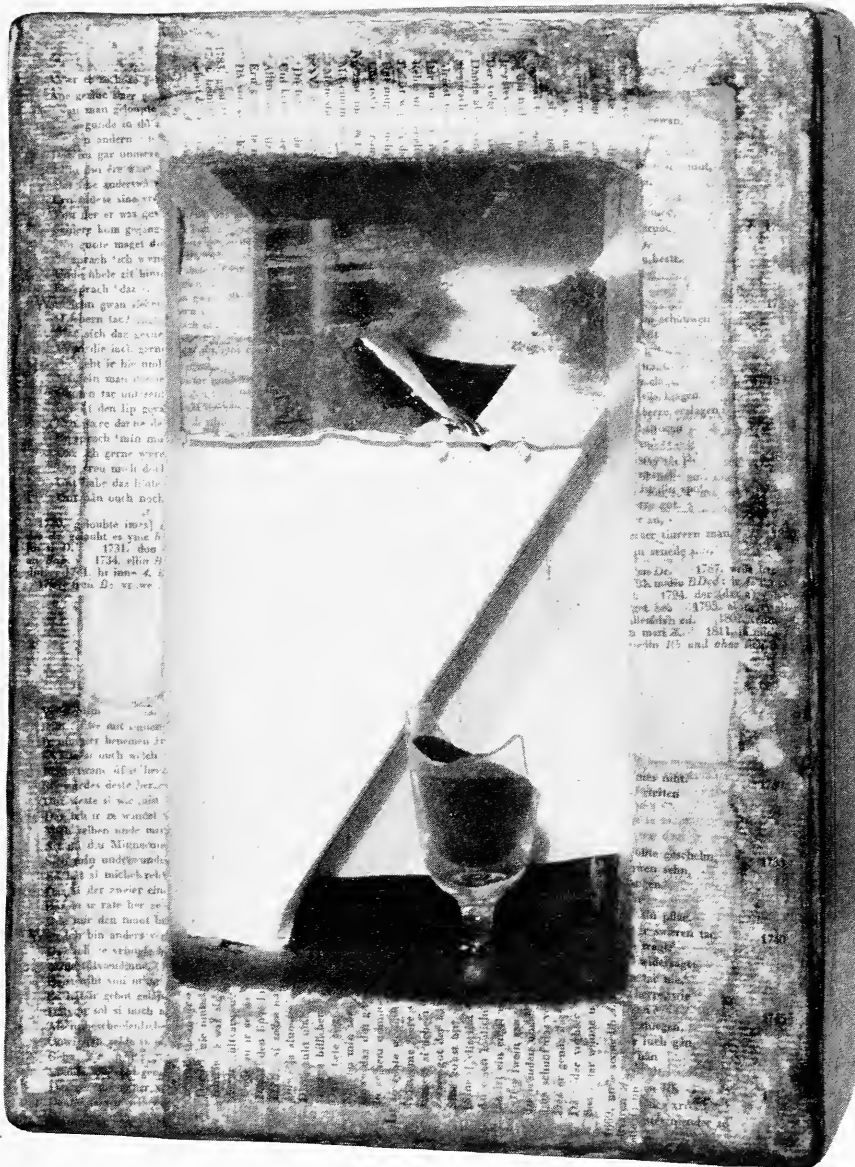
Hôtel de L'Europe: Olga Carini Aguzzi. c. 1954.



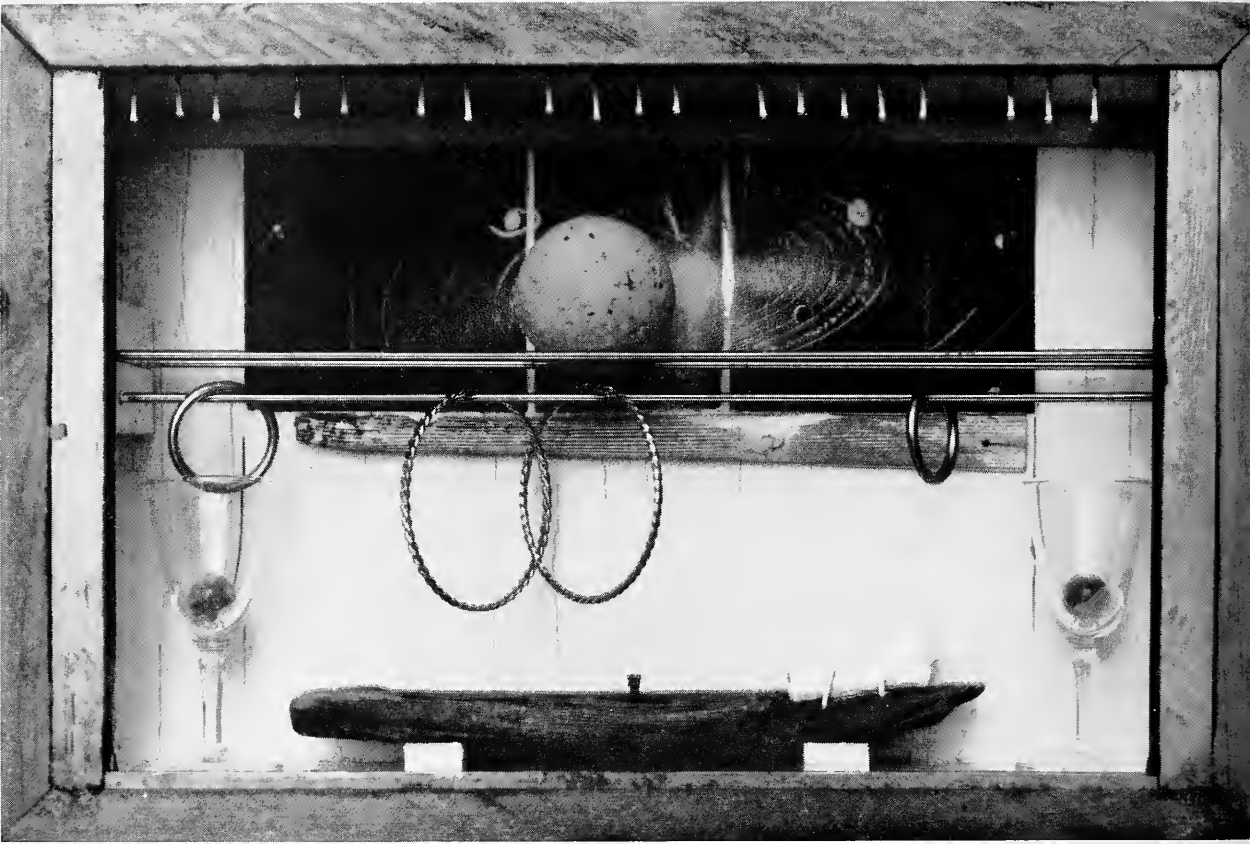
Hôtel BON PORT



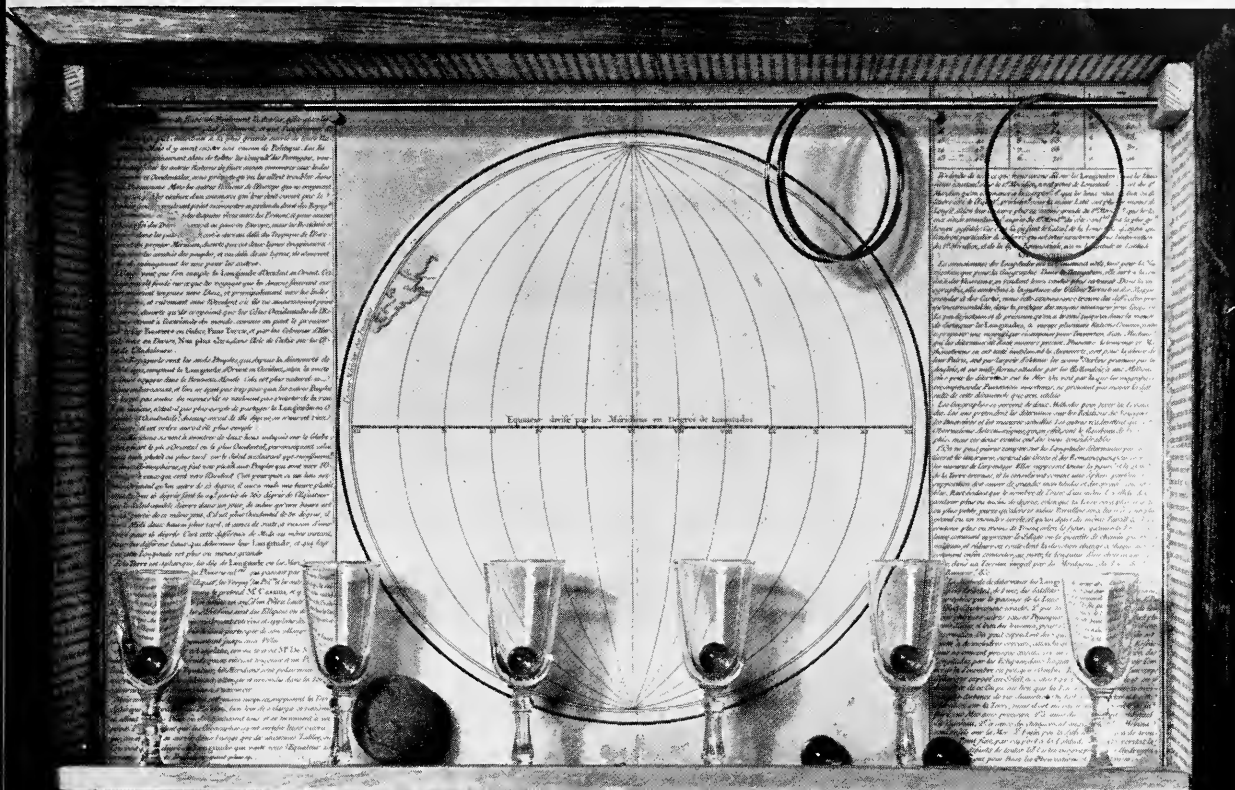
Homage to Blériot. 1956.



Sand Fountain, c. 1956.



Sun Box. c. 1956.

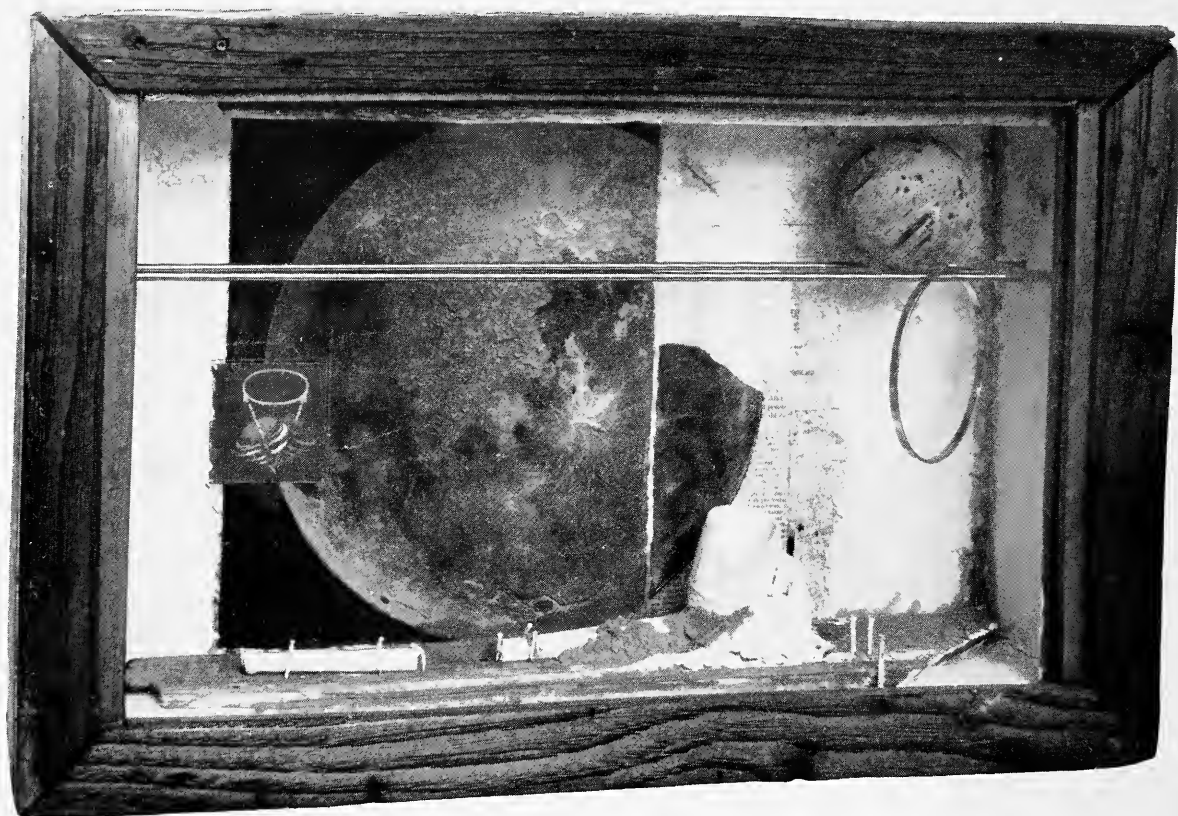




Hôtel de l'Étoile. c. 1956-57.



La Boule D'Or. 1957.



Untitled, c. 1960.



Interplanetary Navigation. 1964.

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ONE MAN EXHIBITIONS

- JULIEN LEVY GALLERY, New York, December 6-31, 1939, *Exhibition of Objects by Joseph Cornell*. Text by Parker Tyler.
- JULIEN LEVY GALLERY, New York, December 10, 1940, *Exhibition of Objects by Joseph Cornell*.
- HUGO GALLERY, New York, December 1946, *Portraits of Women; Constructions and Arrangements by Joseph Cornell*. Various comments and texts.
- COPLEY GALLERIES, Beverly Hills, September 28, 1948, *Joseph Cornell; Objects*.
- EGAN GALLERY, New York, December 1949, *Aviary by Joseph Cornell*. Text by Donald Windham.
- EGAN GALLERY, New York, December 1950, *Night Songs and other New Work by Joseph Cornell*.
- EGAN GALLERY, New York, February 10-March 10, 1953, *Night Voyage by Joseph Cornell*.
- ALLAN FRUMKIN GALLERY, Chicago, April 10-May 7, 1953, *Joseph Cornell, Ten Years of His Art*.
- STABLE GALLERY, New York, December 12, 1955, *Winter Night Skies by Joseph Cornell*.
- WITTENBORN, New York, November 1-15, 1956. *Portrait of Ondine*.
- STABLE GALLERY, New York, December 2-30, 1957, *Joseph Cornell—Selected Works*.
- THE NEW GALLERY, Bennington College, Bennington, Vermont, November 20-December 15, 1959. *Bonitas Solstitialis—selected works by Joseph Cornell and An Exploration of the Colombier*.
- FERUS GALLERY, Los Angeles, December 10, 1962, *Joseph Cornell*.
- NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION, Loeb Student Center, New York, December 3-18, 1963, *Boxes and Collages*.
- THE J. L. HUDSON GALLERY, Detroit, through October 30, 1965, *Joseph Cornell*.
- ROBERT SCHOELKOPF GALLERY, New York, April 26-May 14, 1966, *Joseph Cornell*.
- PASADENA ART MUSEUM, Pasadena, California, January 9-February 11, 1967. *Joseph Cornell Exhibition*. Text by Fairfield Porter. (A revision of article from *Art and Literature*, Spring, 1966).

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- JULIEN LEVY GALLERY, New York, January 9-29, 1932, *Surrealist Group Show*.
- JULIEN LEVY GALLERY, New York, November 26-December 30, 1932, *Minutae, Glass-Bells, Shadow Boxes, Coups d'Oeil, Jouets Surréalistes*.
- MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, New York, December 1936, *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism*. Text by Alfred H. Barr.
- GALERIE BEAUX ARTS, Paris, January-February, 1938, *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*. Organized by André Breton and Paul Eluard.
- JULIEN LEVY GALLERY, New York, December 1940, *Surrealist Group Show*.
- ART OF THIS CENTURY, New York. December 1942, *Objects by Joseph Cornell, Box-Valise by Marcel Duchamp, Bottles by Lawrence Vail*.
- DENVER ART MUSEUM, Denver, February 8-March 12, 1944, *Abstract and Surrealist Art in the United States*. Texts by G.L.M.M. and Sidney Janis. Travelled to Seattle Art Museum, March 26-April 23; Santa Barbara Museum of Art, May 7-June 10; Cincinnati Art Museum, June-July.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, April 9-May 29, 1953, *1953 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, March 17-April 17, 1954, *1954 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, November 14, 1956-January 6, 1957, *1956 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, November 20, 1957-January 12, 1958, *1957 Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*.
- THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, Chicago, January 17-March 3, 1957, *62nd American Exhibition*. Text by Frederick A. Sweet.
- CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM, Houston, January 9-February 16, 1958, *The Disquieting Muse: Surrealism*.

- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, November 19, 1958-January 4, 1959, *1958 Annual Exhibition of American Sculpture, Watercolors and Drawings*.
- DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS, Carnegie Institute, December 5, 1958-February 8, 1959, *The 1958 Pittsburgh Bicentennial International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture*. Text by Gordon Bailey Washburn.
- AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS, New York, January 12-February 6, 1959, *Art and the Found Object*. Travelled to Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, February 22-March 15; Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, April 8-28; Arts Club of Chicago, May 20-June 20; University of Notre Dame, July 1-21; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, September 27-October 18; Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, November 4-24; Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, December 15-January 15, 1960.
- D'ARCY GALLERIES, New York, November 28, 1960-January 14, 1961, *Surrealist Intrusion in the Enchanters Domain, International Surrealist Exhibition*.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, December 7, 1960-January 22, 1961, *Annual Exhibition 1960 Contemporary Sculpture and Drawings*.
- THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, New York, October 2-November 12, 1961, *The Art of Assemblage*. Text by William C. Seitz. Travelled to the Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts, January 9-February 11, 1962; San Francisco Museum of Art, March 5-April 15, 1962.
- DALLAS MUSEUM FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS, Dallas, November 15-December 31, 1961, *The Art that Broke the Looking Glass*. Text by Douglas MacAgy.
- SEATTLE WORLD'S FAIR, Seattle, April 21-October 21, 1962, *Art Since 1950*. Text by Norman Davis and Sam Hunter.
- THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, New York, October 3, 1962-January 6, 1963, *Modern Sculpture from the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection*. Text by H. H. Arnason.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, December 12, 1962-February 3, 1963, *Annual Exhibition 1962 Contemporary Sculpture and Drawings*.
- ROYAL MARKS GALLERY, New York, November 25-December 21, 1963, *Much has Happened 1910-1959*. Text by Dore Ashton.
- ROSE FRIED GALLERY, New York, January 11-February 15, 1964, *Modern Masters*.
- DWAN GALLERY, Los Angeles, February 2-29, 1964, *Boxes*. Text by Walter Hopps.
- THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, Chicago, February 28-April 12, 1964, *67th American Exhibition*. Texts by John Maxon and James Speyer.
- MARTHA JACKSON GALLERY, New York, September 18-October 15, 1964, *New Acquisitions*.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, December 9, 1964-January 31, 1965, *Annual Exhibition 1964 Contemporary American Sculpture*.
- MUSÉE RODIN, Paris, 1965, *Exhibition États-Unis, Sculpture de XX Siècle*. Texts by Cécile Goldscheider and René d'Harnoncourt.
- ROBERT SCHOELKOPF GALLERY, New York, January 4-29, 1966, *Robert Cornell: Memorial Exhibition, Drawings by Robert Cornell, Collages by Joseph Cornell*.
- WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, New York, December 16, 1966-February 5, 1967, *Annual Exhibition 1966 Contemporary Sculpture and Prints*.

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